

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5        1. A heating element comprising:
- at least one mica sheet and a heating ribbon, or strip,  
mounted on said sheet;
- a support device holding said mica sheet and constituting  
a first reflector; and
- 10        a plate secured to said support device and constituting a  
second reflector.
2.       The heating element of claim 1, wherein said support  
device is separated from said mica sheet by a first space.
- 15       3.       The heating element of claim 2, wherein said support  
device has at least one projection coming in contact with said  
mica sheet and defining the thickness of the first space.
- 20       4.       The heating element of claim 3, wherein said projection  
is in the form of a longitudinal rib that creates at least two  
distinct substantially closed volumes situated at the interior  
of said first space.

5. The heating element of claim 1, wherein said plate is separated from said support device by a second space.

6. The heating element of claim 5, wherein plate has at least one projecting part that comes in contact with said support device to define the thickness of said second space and to form a substantially closed volume within said second space.

7. The heating element of claim 5, wherein said plate has at least one air inlet opening that communicates with said second space.

8. The heating element of claim 1, wherein at least one of said support device and said plate is made of stamped and bent sheet metal.

9. The heating element of claim 1, wherein at least one of said support device and said plate a surface that is treated to have good heat reflection properties.

10. An electric toaster comprising: a base; a case having an upper end; a toasting chamber disposed in said case and having an opening in the form of a slot at said upper end for the

introduction and removal of bread; a movable bread support rack in said chamber; and at least one substantially vertical heating element as defined in claim 1.

5 11. The electric toaster of claim 10, wherein said case is separated from said plate of said heating element by a third space that forms an open volume at the level of said upper end directed toward said slot.

10 12. The electric toaster of claim 11, wherein said plate has at least one spacer that comes in contact with said case.

13. The electric toaster of claim 12, wherein said base has at least one air inlet opening that communicates with said third space.

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14. The electric toaster of claim 11, wherein said base has at least one air inlet opening that communicates with said third space.

20 15. The electric toaster of claim 10, wherein said plate has at least one spacer that comes in contact with said case.